

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 055640
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 HA-05 PA-02 SS-15 NSC-05
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 INRE-00 AF-10 /060 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:JCKORNBLUM
APPROVED BY EUR/RPM:SJLEDOGAR
-----109998 040042Z /20
O 040006Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 055640

BELGRADE FOR USDEL CSCE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:CSCE, OCON

SUBJECT: BALTIMORESUN EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS THE TEXT OF AN
EDITORIAL ENTITLED "ROASTING BEAR IN BELGRADE" WHICH
APPEARED IN THE FEBRUARY 28 EDITION OF THE BALTIMORE
SUN:

BEGIN TEXT:

IT HAS BEEN A LONG WINTER FOR RUSSIAN DIPLOMATS IN BELGRADE.
THEY HAVE SQUIRMED, THREATENED AND MANEUVERED, AND ALL
TO NO AVAIL. THE SOVIET UNION STANDS CONDEMNED FOR ITS
DEPLORABLE HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD AMONG MOST OF THE 35 NATIONS
ASSEMBLED TO REVIEW COMPLIANCE WITH THE 1975 HELSINKI
CONFERENCE ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE.

IT MUST BE SMALL COMFORT TO THE KREMLIN THAT IT IS FORCING
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THE BELGRADE CSCE MEETING TOWARD ADJOURNMENT WITH LITTLE
PROSPECT OF A SUBSTANTIAL COMMUNIQUE. CONFERENCE RULES
REQUIRE UNANIMITY. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AS EASY FOR LITTLE
MALTA AS FOR BIG RUSSIA TO HAMSTRING THE DRAFTING OF A
COMMUNIQUE. WHAT REALLY MATTERS IS THAT EUROPEAN NEUTRALS

AND EVEN SEVERAL OF THE MORE INDEPENDENTLY INCLINED

WARSAW PACT STATES HAVE WITNESSED THE TRANSPARENT KREMLI EFFORT TO WEASEL ON ITS 1975 PLEDGE TO RESPECT "HUMAN RIGHTS...FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS...AND THE FREER MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND IDEAS." WHAT ALSO MATTERS IS THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS NOT DARED TO BLOCK THE SCHEDULING OF ANOTHER REVIEW CONFERENCE, THIS TIME IN MADRID IN 1980, WHERE AGAIN ITS FEET SHOULD BE HELD TO THE FIRE.

THE BELGRADE CONFERENCE IS NO MORE LIKELY TO CHANGE THE AUTHORITARIAN NATURE OF THE SOVIET UNION THAN DID THE HELSINKI CONFERENCE. THERE MAY INDEED BE FURTHER CRACK-DOWNS, WITH A SHOW TRIAL FOR SOVIET DISSIDENT ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY. NEVERTHELESS, THE HUMAN RIGHTS MOVEMENTS THAT SPRANG UP IN THE SOVIET BLOC AFTER THE 1975 CONFERENCE CAN TAKE HEART THAT INTERNATIONAL MORAL PRESSURE REMAINS FOCUSED ON THE KREMLIN. EVEN IF THERE IS A BLAND COMMUNIQUE, OR NO COMMUNIQUE, THE VERY PROCESS OF HAVING THE SOVIET SYSTEM IN THE DOCK AT BELGRADE WAS WORTHWHILE.

SOME WESTERNERS AND NEUTRALS FELT, ON OCCASION, THAT THE AMERICAN DELEGATE, ARTHUR J. GOLDBERG, WENT TOO FAR IN CASTIGATING THE SOVIET RECORD. BUT WHO WILL FORGET MR. GOLDBERG'S RESPONSE WHEN HE WAS BAITED ABOUT THE "WILMINGTON 10" CASE? THE US REPRESENTATIVE SAID HE PERSONALLY FELT THE DEFENDANTS SHOULD HAVE BEEN FREED, UNCLASSIFIED

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THEN ASKED IF THE SOVIET DELEGATE HAD "ANY SIMILAR RESERVATIONS ABOUT SOVIET JUSTICE." THE SPIRIT OF HELSINKI DEMANDS, AFTER ALL, THAT ALL GOVERNMENTS BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE WAY THEY TREAT THEIR CITIZENS.

SOVIET PRESIDENT BREZHNEV CONSTANTLY DEPLORES US EFFORTS TO CREATE "LINKAGE" BETWEEN DETENTE AND SUCH BLOODY-MINDEDNESS AS THE SOVIET-CUBAN OPERATION IN THE HORN OF AFRICA. YET IT WAS HE, A YEAR AGO, WHO WARNED THAT SALT II WAS BEING IMPEDED BY PRESIDENT CARTER'S HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN. IN REALITY, LINKAGE EXISTS ALWAYS IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. WHATEVER PROPAGANDA LICKING THE SOVIET UNION IS TAKING ON HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD HARDLY BE SUFFICIENT FOR MOSCOW TO SCUTTLE SALT. RATHER, ITS CURRENT CHOICE SEEMS TO LIE BETWEEN THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE IT HOPES TO REAP IN ETHIOPIA, AT THE COST OF LOSING POTENTIAL SALT RATIFICATION VOTES IN CONGRESS, AND THE SECURITY-ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES IT SEES IN A STRATEGIC ARMS CONTROL AGREEMENT. THE BLEAK STATE OF AMERICAN-SOVIET RELATIONS IS ALL THE MORE REASON TO HOLD THE KREMLIN TO ITS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITMENTS. CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE055640
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: JCKORNBLUM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780098-0605
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t197803106/aaaadmcf.tel
Line Count: 115
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 434b7bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3116204
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BALTIMORESUN EDITORIAL FOLLOWING FOR YOUR INFORMATION IS THE TEXT OF AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "ROASTING BEAR IN BELGRADE" WHI
TAGS: OCON, CSCE
To: BELGRADE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/434b7bb8-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014